

 Diocese of Chichester

archdeacons' visitation news

Dear Churchwardens

Channels of God's love

Every year, the Oxford English Dictionary tells us what the 'word of the year' was. In 2023, it was, apparently, 'rizz'. Coined by Generation Z, this slang term is all about charisma, style and the ability to attract others.

St Paul, in his letters, refers to a variety of gifts being poured out upon the Church, for the building up of her life and the advancement of the Gospel. This is the work of the Holy Spirit, pouring the love of God into our hearts, whereby we can share our faith and inspire others to become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Evangelisation is nothing less the grace of revealing the beauty and truth of God in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ; that is the primary charism of the Church.

As Churchwardens, you have been called out from among your local church and community by those who have seen something of this charism in you, manifest in the variety of gifts that the Holy Spirit gives in the service of God that you may encourage and, alongside your clergy and others, become channels of God's love and presence in the world.

St Thomas Aquinas lists 24 charisms in the life of the Church! Space doesn't allow me to go into all of them, but I would pick out administration, encouragement, evangelism, faith, giving, hospitality, intercessory prayer, knowledge, leadership, service and wisdom from among them as being especially pertinent for those of you called to this ministry within the life your parish.

Through the faithful living out of one or more of these gifts the Holy Spirit will continue to renew and strengthen the life and charism of the Church, that through worship, celebration of the sacraments, proclamation of the Gospel, care for the poor, the sick, the lonely and the unloved, all may be drawn into the peace and unity of the Kingdom which is his will and purpose for all nations and peoples.

The Ven. Luke Irvine-Capel
Archdeacon of Chichester



The Venerable Martin Lloyd Williams
Archdeacon of Brighton & Lewes



The Venerable Luke Irvine-Capel
Archdeacon of Chichester



The Venerable Edward Dowler
Archdeacon of Hastings



The Venerable Angela Martin
Archdeacon of Horsham

Think and act in ways that are environmentally liberating

There is great joy to be discovered in engagement with the Church's environmental agenda. Creation care and the pursuit of protecting biodiversity are immensely lifegiving activities.

This is why, on 73 occasions in the gospels, Jesus referred to himself as the Son of Man. That might be translated as the human one, the second Adam, the one from the earth. Colossians 1.16 & 17 says, "All things have been created in him [Jesus] and for him... in him all things hold together."

It would be fair to say that creation care is the very mission of God. To put your hands in the soil or your feet in the sea is to experience divine handiwork, stuff crafted personally by Jesus Christ and entrusted to us.

In 2023, the Diocese of Chichester endorsed a roadmap to move us towards net carbon zero by 2030. This is consistent with the Church of England's national Routemap [this is the CoFE term]. Essentially, there are two components to our roadmap.

The first is to work hard at reducing the carbon footprint created by our parsonage properties, our schools and our church buildings. This is an extremely challenging task. We currently emit 13,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide each year. We have successfully applied for funding from the national Church to take on a programme manager, a fundraiser and schools project manager to help us with the heavy lifting involved with reducing these emissions. Steve Collins started as the programme manager on 1st February this year, and we will be sharing him with the dioceses of Guildford and Portsmouth.



Revd Buff Stone
Diocesan Environment Officer

After many years offering huge encouragement to parishes across our diocese, the Revd Debbie Beer has stepped down as Diocesan Environment Officer and is to be succeeded by the Revd Buff Stone. Buff will continue the work started by Debbie of encouraging parishes and Christians across Sussex to think and act in ways that are environmentally liberating. This is the second component of our environmental strategy.

Buff is creating a network of parishes and Christians throughout the diocese who can support and encourage one another towards attaining Eco Church Awards, working with local communities (young people in particular), raising awareness of how to respond to the environmental crisis in ways that are authentically Christian, and pursuing this essentially missional work in the most creative of ways. There will be a diocesan Environment Day on 15th June 2024 at St Mark's Holbrook, near Horsham.

How can you help?

Take a look at registering your church for Eco Church through A Rocha. This is a really simple way to start your eco journey. There are many churches registered, working towards, Bronze, Silver and even Gold Awards.

Please encourage your PCC to include a standing item on the PCC agenda for eco development. Find out who your deanery eco rep is. You can contact Buff Stone by emailing:

- ✉ environment.officer@chichester.anglican.org
- 🌐 www.facebook.com/ParishEnvironmentSupportNetwork

The Ven. Martin Lloyd-Williams
Archdeacon of Brighton & Lewes



Archdeacons' loans



Churchwardens often carry a heavy load when it comes to the repair of church buildings. They are owed a great debt of gratitude by clergy and parishioners alike for carrying this often-heavy burden.

Archdeacons are notoriously obsessed by the drains and rightly so: a staggering proportion of damage to church buildings is caused by water ingress because of such issues. The regular (twice or three times a year) clearing out of gutters and 'rainwater goods' so that excess water can drain away from your church building will pay for itself many times over.

However, if there is damage to the church or church hall, it is possible to apply for an Archdeacon's loan. These come from several funds that are available to the Diocesan Board of Finance.

This can only be used for repairs and is not available for other projects, however desirable, such as reordering. A set of notes about the loan is available from your Archdeacon but, essentially, if the incumbent and PCC are agreed that they would like to apply for a loan, they can do so, providing annual accounts and a PCC resolution.

The loans are given interest free over a maximum period of seven years, to a maximum amount of £50,000. There are limited funds so sadly there are no guarantees, and parishes who do not have the money to pay for repairs will for obvious reasons be given priority over those who do.

It's important to note that the Archdeacon will seek a guarantee (so far as it can be given) that Parish Share will not be reduced during the period of the loan. The Archdeacon will also want to see an outline plan of how the PCC intends to find the funds to repay the loan, such as through fundraising or increased income from the improved building.

So, if you are struggling with repairs to a church building, please do feel free to contact your Archdeacon or one of the church buildings team – it will never be an imposition: that is what we are here for. It may be that seeking an Archdeacon's loan is the way forward or it may be that other suggestions might be considered but we are here to help and share the burdens as part of the one household and the one body.

The Ven. Edward Dowler
Archdeacon of Hastings

Church Buildings Update Evenings

The Church Buildings Update Evenings are aimed at Churchwardens and clergy and will take place on the following four evenings in the autumn:

- **Wednesday 18th September** – Archdeaconry of Chichester
- **Wednesday 25th September** – Archdeaconry of Hastings
- **Wednesday 2nd October** – Archdeaconry of Horsham
- **Tuesday 8th October** – Archdeaconry of Brighton and Lewes

Further information, including venues, details of the programme, and booking information, will follow later this spring.

Church Buildings Support Officer

Sophie Allen

Sophie Allen was appointed to the role of Church Buildings Support Officer and started working at Church House in Hove in November 2023, having previously worked at a small planning consultancy working with historic buildings and archaeology.



For this issue of Archdeacons' Visitation News, Sophie describes her role and how she can help Churchwardens with any issues relating to the care and repair of church buildings:

"My academic background is in ecclesiastical architecture, and I've always been enthusiastic about church buildings of all kinds.

"I'm used to talking to local authorities about issues affecting Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other buildings, historic and modern.

"The 'Church Buildings Support Officer' role is a new one, funded by the Church Buildings Council's Buildings for Mission Fund. Most dioceses across the country have appointed a CBSO, and others are still being appointed to meet various local needs. Here in the Diocese of Chichester, my role is mostly focused around the management of church buildings – I am available to help parishes plan maintenance work, repairs and building projects of all kinds.

"I work closely with the DAC team on permissions for building works here at Church House, and I can help to explain how the faculty and List B permissions systems work in tandem with the secular planning system.

"I'm currently working to update the DAC's records, and to ensure that every church has an up-to-date Quinquennial Inspection – many clergy and wardens have already received emails from me about this.

"Please contact me if your church is overdue for a Quinquennial, or if you don't currently have a working relationship with an Inspecting Architect.

"Sometimes the only way to really understand the various issues at play is to visit the churches in person, so you can always contact me to arrange a visit, or to discuss any building repairs that have come up in your regular inspections.

The best way to get in touch with me is by email:

✉ sophie.allen@chichester.anglican.org or on
☎ **01273 425699**

I usually work from Church House, though I am often out on visits, so please do leave me a message if I don't pick up."

God's own little acre



Our churchyards are often referred to as God's own little acre. This probably stems from the area of land originally given for the purpose of building a church. These small patches of land whether they be situated in an urban or a rural environment are in fact compact time capsules.

Not just because they are the resting place for all those who have gone before and a remembrance of the lives of loved ones lost but because they hold in the soil the treasure of future promise.

Our churchyards are essentially land which has remained uncultivated for centuries. In a time when we are keenly aware of the huge loss of biodiversity due to our over cultivation, overuse of pesticides, herbicides and synthetic fertilizers, churchyards could be the springboard that nature is calling for.

It is lovely to walk through the grounds of a well-loved and maintained churchyard, but it is equally lovely to see the evidence of ancient woodland within these places of rest and tranquillity. In my own churchyard we have been cheered this year by seeing once again the great carpet of snowdrops gently covering the ground.

Ancient woodlands offer a unique collection of plants and fungi, and many can be traced back to when they first appeared on maps created around the 1600s. In some cases, our churchyards are much older being often set on pre-existing sacred sites. We have evidence of yew trees many hundreds of years old and huge patches of wood anemone and sometimes even the odd patch of Lilly-of-the-valley along with the fluffy lichen we see attached to branches of the trees and shrubs. All of which create a rich variety of wild uncultivated plants and all strong indicators of ancient woodland.

We are all aware of the 5 Marks of Mission but how many of us give as much thought as we ought to the 5th Mark which is 'to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth'?

For all those who care for a churchyard I would like to encourage you to give some considered thought to how that wonderful sacred and ancient space is managed. This can be an excellent way of fulfilling the commission we have in the 5th Mark of Mission and an exciting way to encourage the next generation to be involved.

Why not consider joining in with 'Love Your Burial Ground Week' and 'Churches Count on Nature' between 8th and 16th June this year, which is a collaboration between the charity 'Caring for God's Acre', the Church of England and the Church of Wales and A Rocha UK.



To find out more, you can visit the Churches Count on Nature page at: www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk. And if you haven't already done so why not think about becoming an Eco Church – you can find out more at A Rocha UK.

 www.caringforgodsacre.org.uk

As Pope Francis sets out in his encyclical letter of 2015 *Laudato Si'*, we have one common home, and we must care for it as it cares for us.

The Ven. Angela Martin
Archdeacon of Horsham



For more information

Call: 0345 777 3322 **Email:** churches@ecclesiastical.com

Facebook: Ecclesiastical  [@churchmatters](https://twitter.com/churchmatters)

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